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                  UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
                    WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
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                          WACO DIVISION
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   MIDAS GREEN TECHNOLOGIES,) Docket No. WA 22-CA-050 ADA
   LLC
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                               Waco, Texas
   VS.
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   RHODIUM ENTERPRISES,
                              ) November 7, 2022
   INC, ET AL
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                  TRANSCRIPT OF DISCOVERY HEARING
8
              BEFORE THE HONORABLE DEREK T. GILLILAND
9
10 | APPEARANCES:
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   (Appearances Continued:)
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   Proceedings reported by digital sound recording,
   transcript produced by computer-aided transcription.
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            (Proceedings commence at 10:05 a.m.)
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            THE COURT: All right. Good morning, everybody.
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            We're here for a discovery dispute and I'm going
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   to start by asking Ms. Copp to call the case.
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            THE CLERK: Yes, your Honor.
            Calling Case No. WA 22-CV-50, styled, Midas Green
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   Technologies, LLC vs. Rhodium Enterprises, Incorporated,
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   et al, called for a discovery hearing.
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            THE COURT: All right. Could I have
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   announcements starting with the plaintiff.
11
            MR. SMITH: Yes. For the plaintiff, your Honor,
12
   Michael Smith, Henry Pogorzelski and Courtney Neufeld, and
13
   we're ready to proceed.
            THE COURT: All right. Very good.
14
            And for the defendant.
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16
            MS. LI: Good morning, your Honor.
17
            Kat Li of Kirkland & Ellis on behalf of the
18
   defendants. With me is Gianni Cutri and Ben Herbert.
                                                          And
19
   today, Mr. Cutri will be doing the primary speaking.
20
   We're ready.
21
            THE COURT: All right. Very good. Well, I -- so
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   I looked over the parties' chart and -- you know, the
23
   discovery dispute chart that they submitted, and just to
24
   make sure I've got myself oriented properly, it looks like
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   it's an issue regarding whether plaintiff has properly
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   charted all of the products that plaintiff contends
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   practice the patent for purposes of a lost profit claim.
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   Am I understanding that right?
            MR. CUTRI: I think, your Honor, that it's for
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   multiple purposes, but in essence, your Honor is right.
5
6
   Plaintiff has charted two products or three, depending on
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   the way they count, out of the 11 that they contend
8
   practice the invention, and they contend that those
9
   products -- they will rely on these products to show
10
   secondary considerations, in particular, commercial
11
             That's an issue they bear the burden on. And
   success.
12
   that they plan to use those products for lost profits,
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   which is another issue that they bear the burden on.
14
            We've asked them if that's the case and they've
15
   confirmed that yes, they do plan to rely on those other
16
   products, and do plan to tell the jury that they -- that
   their asserted claims are practiced by those products.
17
18
            THE COURT:
                        Okay.
19
            MR. POGORZELSKI: Your Honor --
20
            THE COURT: Yeah. Go ahead, Mr. Pogorzelski.
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            MR. POGORZELSKI: Your Honor, I think Mr. Cutri
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   is a little going overboard. We are relatively early in
23
   the case and the issue of whether we will -- whether we
24
   will have a lost profits claim and the sorts of secondary
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   factors that we'll assert is premature right now. We're
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   early in the case and what we have here is, you know, we
   have provided certain charts, and the question before the
   Court, I think, is whether the representative charts are
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   sufficient or whether we have to chart every single
   product that we contend is made according to our patent.
5
6
            THE COURT: Okay. Yeah. And the thing that was
   throwing me off is when I first looked at the chart, I had
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8
   assumed we were talking about infringement contentions;
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   but then, after reading through it, I realized we were
10
   talking about charts created by the plaintiff on the
11
   plaintiff's own products. So that's what struck me as a
12
   somewhat unusual situation.
13
            MR. CUTRI: It is, your Honor. And, your Honor,
14
   could I -- well, I'm happy to address the motion in
   whichever fashion you'd like. I could respond to what Mr.
15
16
   Pogorzelski said and maybe make my affirmative case if
17
   that works for your Honor. But I'll proceed in whatever
18
   fashion you prefer.
19
            THE COURT: Yeah, let's do that. Let me -- I'll
20
   start by telling you that in general, you know, the Court
21
   allows -- at least go in the typical fashion where the
22
   plaintiff is charting the infringing products and
23
   infringement contentions. That's what struck me as
24
   unusual when I read the disputed or the interrogatory at
25
   issue. I was thinking, well, that's the reason for
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   preliminary infringement contentions. And then, I
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   realized, well, we're not talking about infringement
   contentions, so it's a little bit different. But I will
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4
   say that for preliminary infringement contentions, we
   typically allow parties to chart representative products
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   as opposed to having to chart every single product.
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7
            So with that kind of general practice in mind,
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   Mr. Cutri, if you want to go ahead and argue the
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   defendants' position or your position on this, please
10
   proceed.
11
            MR. CUTRI: Absolutely, your Honor. And thank
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   you for taking the time with this issue. It's an issue of
13
   significant importance for us as the defendant.
14
            So in this case, the plaintiff contends that 11
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   of its products practice the asserted claims. They
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   confirm that they want to tell the jury that all 11 of
   these products practice the asserted claims and that
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18
   they're going to use those products to demonstrate lost
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   profits, which is an issue they bear the burden on. And
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   for -- to try to establish that their patent, their
21
   invention was commercially successful, another issue they
22
   bear the burden on.
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            We want to challenge that contention, Judge, and
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   that's really why we need them to supply what they've
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   already supplied for some of the products, for all of the
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   products but, in more particularly, on an
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   element-by-element basis, a claim chart for all 11
   products. We've supplied cases and the case law is
3
   unequivocal that when a plaintiff makes a broad
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   contention, they're required to supply an
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   element-by-element claim chart and that makes sense.
                                                          This
6
7
   is not a scenario where the plaintiff can just assert
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   their claim chart is, quote, representative because we
9
   dispute that the remaining products practice the claims.
10
   And it's only the plaintiff who can make out that case.
11
            If you were to allow a plaintiff to say, well,
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   this is representative, what we believe is happening here
13
   is, the plaintiff cannot make out its case that the other
14
   products practice these claims. And they're trying to use
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   the representative concept as a way to avoid having to
16
   make their proofs. And so, what we are left with is a
17
   situation where the plaintiff wants to just say, well,
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   we'll just tell you how two of the products work and you
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   have to take our word for it that we have evidence and we
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   could supply you with other claim charts, but we're not
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   going to do that.
22
            To be clear, the plaintiff has told us they have
23
   already figured out their positions on these other
24
   products. So this is not a situation where there's an
25
   undue burden here. They've already told us of all the
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products we made, these are the 11 that practice the asserted claims. And this is not undue burden. The reason that, you know, the representative concept doesn't work here is representative when a plaintiff makes a representative assertion in the context of infringement, the plaintiff says all of my entire case rises and falls with these products. So if you prove that these don't infringe, then none of the products infringe.

Here, what the plaintiff has done is, they've done for two or -- the two products they have charted, they haven't even charted all of the asserted claims, that's number one. And then, number two, we've looked and we don't believe that they could actually establish that certain of the claim elements, many of the claim elements are found in these other products. And we've actually asked them. We've said, well, if you're saying representative, are you willing to agree right now that those two products that you've charted, one, for the claims you haven't charted, you'll never try to say that those other products practice them, and they said no, no. We are going to later in the case show up with a different contention.

So we straightaway said this is not representative in the sense that the plaintiff typically says representative. And then, two, we said, well, were

the products in claims you have charted? If we establish that those products don't practice the claims, will you agree that none of the products practice the claims? And this was in a meet-and-confer I had two weeks ago, they said absolutely not. We are going to reserve our right to show up later with new contentions as to those other products.

And so, the reason representative doesn't work here is, it doesn't work in two different -- in both -- either direction. First, it's not representative because the plaintiff, we believe, can't make out their case as to the other nine products. And then, additionally, the plaintiff is also saying, and for the ones we have made out some claim charts for, we will not agree that our case rises and falls. But to be clear, even if they were to make that agreement, that would be insufficient because we need to see the gaps -- we need to see how they are filling in the gaps in the claim charts that we know exist.

Again, the plaintiff -- now for the plaintiff's point -- from the plaintiff's perspective, this is relatively simple. They said they've done the work. They say that have charted the products internally. They say that they don't need any discovery from anyone else. They don't need, you know, us to tell them how their products

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work. They don't need us to tell them how they're reading the claims on their own products. This is a scenario where there's zero burden, right? And a representative stipulation is usually a case where there's a lot of effort involved.
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But if you look at the plaintiff's submission, they say straightaway, the charts that we're asking for, quote, will duplicate the charts already provided. And we're talking about 11 products and two patents and a number of claims. This is not thousands of products or hundreds of claims. This is a small amount of work that the plaintiff, again, has done for some of the products and some of the claims and has shared with us those positions, and they say they have done it for the others.

Honor, is to just say, look, for what you've done for some of them, the defendant disputes that, disputes that they're representative. The defendant believes that there are elements that aren't found. That's their prerogative. Since you bear the burden when it comes to a discovery request, you have to turn over the information. If you say it's there and if you're saying it's duplicative and we would just be able to -- we, the plaintiff, have already done the work, then we just want them to turn over to us the work that they say they've already done.

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And so, you know, your Honor, I could address
   they have a point about experts, but I don't think this is
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   a situation where they need an expert and they've conceded
   as much. This is a situation where they've already
   created charts and they didn't need an expert to create
                They've already concluded that the other
   the charts.
   products practice the claims. They didn't need an expert
   for that.
            So at the end of the day, the plaintiff should
10
   not be able to get up and say all of these products
   practice the invention but then, refuse to give us in
   discovery the evidence that backs that up. And so, we
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   would ask the Court to tell the plaintiff, give them your
   products, your claims, give them the contentions.
   you're right and the contentions are correct, then you
   haven't lost anything since you've already done the
   analysis.
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            THE COURT: Okay. Let me hear from Mr.
   Pogorzelski.
20
            MR. POGORZELSKI: Yes, your Honor. Thank you.
            First off, we haven't charted these products
   already. And so, it's not correct to say that there's no
   undue burden. Your Honor, what I would say first, in
   summary, this is a proportionality case. And if I may
   share my screen.
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            THE COURT: Certainly.
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            MR. POGORZELSKI: Would that be acceptable?
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            THE COURT: That'd be fine. Yeah.
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            MR. POGORZELSKI: Okay. So I want to go to first
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   principles because that's important. And I hope that you
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   can see a chart that has rule -- has Rule 26 in front of
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   you.
8
            THE COURT:
                        I can.
9
            MR. POGORZELSKI: Okay. Great.
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            So the standard is relevant and proportional to
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   the needs of the case. And so, I would say, your Honor,
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   we submit you have to look at the proportionality
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   standards. And so, the Court is correct to say, this is
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   an unusual case. We're not arguing about infringement
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   contentions. We're not arguing about invalidity
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   contentions. We're arguing about whether the defendant
   can make the plaintiff go through the trouble and the
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   expense of charting all of the products that it currently
19
   says that it will -- that are practicing its claims.
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            Now, defendant is saying that okay, well, it's
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   relevant to the issue of lost profits and it's relevant to
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   the issue of secondary factors. And what I would submit,
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   your Honor, is that those issues are not key issues at
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   this point in the case. If charting -- if the plaintiffs
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   would always have to chart its products, then that should
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be in the local rules. That should be in the local patent rules, but it's not.

So if I may, I want to share the case that we're relying upon because it is highly relevant and that's the Stratus case that we've referenced. So Stratus is a discovery dispute, but it is important because it explains — it explains that in certain instances when parties are required or when parties are asked to do charting, you put it in the expert report. So now, in this case, we've got secondary factors and then, we've got this issue of lost profits, and we submit that those are the quintessential issues that are put into expert reports.

So now, Stratus was this case where the court was counting interrogatories. People didn't want to copy interrogatories. But what I want to highlight is what the facts of this case were. In this case, the plaintiff was asked to provide invalidity -- I'm sorry, validity charts and plaintiffs normally don't provide validity charts. And that's what this Interrogatory No. 12 is. And the Court said, oh, by the way, for interrogatories that are typically answered in expert reports, the Court's usual practice is to allow a party to defer answering the interrogatory until the corresponding expert report is due. Interrogatory No. 12 is such an interrogatory.

We respectfully submit that defendants'

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   Interrogatory No. 4 in this case is also such an
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   interrogatory. So going back to the factors, this is not
   a case where these charts are of key importance. They're
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   really -- this is something that's going to be addressed
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   long down the case. Now, looking at the other factors,
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   amount in controversy, I think that's neutral.
6
   parties' relative access to the information.
7
8
            Now, we've provided or we'll shortly provide
   discovery for all of these 11 products. Defendants are
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10
   fully capable of looking at these products and determining
11
   their position as to whether or not they are made
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   according to the patent.
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            Next issue is party's resources. Just to be
14
   clear, Plaintiff Midas is a small startup in Austin,
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   Texas. We have about 10 employees in Austin. We have
   maybe another five to seven in a back office in Mexico.
16
17
   Defendants in this case has -- according to their latest
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   SEC filing is valued at $650 million and has 96 employees
19
   and three independent contractors. So in terms of
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   resources, yeah, I'm sure defendants would love to
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   generate additional busywork for this firm for my client
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   to have to deal with. Our position is, this factor also
23
   favors denial.
24
            Now, next issue, the importance of the discovery
   in resolving the issues. This isn't something where we're
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   withholding charts. If I have the charts, I would hand
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   them over. Now, in the case of the three charts we did,
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   these charts were generated towards the end of a prior
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   case, so we handed them over. But that's not the same as
   admitting their relevance. It's not the same as admitting
5
   that this discovery is proportional to the needs of the
6
7
   case.
8
            And then, finally, whether the burden and expense
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   of the proposed discovery outweighs its likely benefit.
10
   So if Mr. Cutri, if defendants want to argue that, hey,
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   we're just wrong, none of our products are made according
12
   to our patent, they don't need discovery from us. They
13
   have their own experts and this is simple mechanical
14
   technology. This is not like rocket science.
15
            Defendants don't need us to generate 11 more
16
   charts in order to prove up our theory that our products
17
   are made according to our patent. So in sum, this is a
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   proportionality case. Defendants are trying to generate
19
   extra work for us and there's no real benefit.
20
            THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Pogorzelski, is plaintiff
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   -- setting the chart aside, is plaintiff providing
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   discovery only for the products that were charted, or will
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   they be providing discovery on all of plaintiff's
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   products?
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            MR. POGORZELSKI: Your Honor, we will -- if we
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haven't done it already, we will be producing discovery on
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2
   all of these products. We're not withholding anything.
   And as a backdrop, your Honor, there was a prior
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   litigation between Midas and a -- and an affiliated
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5
   company of the defendants' and during that litigation, we
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   produced essentially all the documents we had for our
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   products made according to the patent.
8
            In accordance with an agreement we reached, all
9
   of those documents from the prior case have already been
10
   produced. So, your Honor, I'm not representing that they
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   have every CAD file for every product made according to
12
   the patent, but we're not withholding it and they will get
13
   it if they don't have it already.
14
            THE COURT: Okay. All right. So here's what I'm
   going to do and it's how we would -- how I would normally
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16
   address this if this was involving plaintiff's
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   infringement contentions. But the Court typically permits
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   infringement contentions in the form of representative
19
   products. For example, if there are 100 products accused
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   and the plaintiff wants to just chart one product under
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   the allegation that the rest -- that that one is
22
   representative of the others, that's something that we
23
   typically permit.
24
            So I'm going to permit plaintiffs to do that in
25
   this case where they're talking about their own product.
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Since they are providing discovery on it, Mr. Cutri, defendant will be free to undercut and demonstrate and analyze how some of the discovery might show that, in fact, the second or third products are different from the one that was charted and, therefore, the chart's not representative.

Now, I will tell plaintiff that if you do intend -- much like infringement contentions, if you do intend to rely on the plaintiff's products practicing the patent, different claim element -- or claims of the patents, then you're going to -- for the representative products, I think it's incumbent on you to provide charts for each of the claims that you will want to later contend are practiced by your patent.

So if your expert's going to provide a report at some point and say that plaintiff's products practice claim 1 and claim 1's the one you've already charted, then I think you're fine. But if your expert wants to say the plaintiff's products practice claims 1, 3 and 7, then in response to Interrogatory 4, I think it's -- then you're going to need to provide not necessarily infringement contentions but the plaintiff's equivalent to show that this is how we contend our representative product practices claims 1, 3 and 7, or whatever ones you're going to contend it practices.

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But I'm not going to order you to provide charts
on all 10 products, but will order that you provide charts
on every claim that your -- you contend your product
practices. And then --
        MR. POGORZELSKI: So every asserted claim --
         THE COURT: Pardon?
        MR. POGORZELSKI: I'm sorry. So, your Honor,
you're saying every asserted claim that we contend, we'll
have to provide a representative chart?
         THE COURT: Correct. That you contend.
                                                So if
you only want to contend that the products practice one of
the claims and you're happy with that contention because
it gets you where you need to be, then you'll only need to
provide a chart on that one claim. But if you want to be
able to have your expert say not only does it practice
claim 1, but it practices these other claims, as well,
then you need to provide charts on those other claims.
         You're essentially going to be cabined or limited
to what you've charted when your expert testifies as far
as the claims practiced by plaintiff's products. Does
that make sense?
         MR. POGORZELSKI: Yes, your Honor.
         THE COURT: Okay. And again, if it's going to be
plaintiff's contention that the products charted are
representative of all of plaintiff's products, as long as
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that contention's clear from the interrogatory response, 1 2 then the chart's sufficient, especially in light of the fact that plaintiff is still going to provide complete 3 4 discovery so that if defendant wants to come in later and say, look -- going with the commercial success argument 5 says, look, the commercial success is product No. 2 and 6 7 it's not at all like product No. 1 and we could show you why, then you'll have the discovery necessary to do that 8 9 in response. 10 MR. CUTRI: Your Honor, thank you. And I just 11 wanted to clarify on that -- in that scenario, if we say, 12 here's product 5 that was uncharted by the plaintiff and 13 we say product 5 is -- does not practice the invention and 14 our expert gets up and says it's missing, you know, the 15 control facility and we say that product was very 16 commercially successful and, therefore, there's no 17 commercial success. Am I to understand your ruling that 18 the plaintiff cannot at that point say, oh, wait a second, 19 here's how product 5 practices. 20 In other words, consistent with what you said,

In other words, consistent with what you said, the plaintiff can -- the plaintiff's expert can only testify about the products that they've charted. Because the reason I raise that, your Honor, is because I think a great number of these, there's going to be sort of an absence of proof-type argument, and I don't want to be

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   surprised at trial if -- with the plaintiff coming back
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   and saying, well, you're right. Now that we realize
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   there's an absence of proof, we're going to show up with
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   our expert and expert's going to start talking about
   product No. 5.
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            So that's -- and we're happy to tell the
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7
   plaintiff, hey, these are the problems, but we just want
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   to make sure that since the plaintiff wants a
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   representative case, the plaintiff's going to get a
10
   representative case, which means they don't get the
11
   ability later to come in and say, oh, wait a second, now
12
   that we understand our proof problem, we're going to come
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   in with a new contention as to product 5, for example.
14
            THE COURT: Okay. And I think I follow you.
                                                           The
15
   difficulty is that it's -- at this early of the stage,
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   it's kind of hard to really define all of the boundaries.
   So if plaintiff wants to say that products 1 and 2 have
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   been charted and their expert says, look, 1 and 2 have
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   been charted and they're representative and they practice
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   all the claim elements, and then, defendants' expert comes
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   in and says, well, no, really, the commercial success is
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   on this uncharted product and it does something completely
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   different and here's why. Plaintiff's expert obviously is
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   free to go back and say no, no, I disagree. I think it
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   does work the same way as the representative product as I
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   stated before and here's why. And then, you've just got
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   essentially a fact question that the jury needs to sort
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   out.
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            However, if there's some unique aspect of a
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   product -- and this is all somewhat advisory at this stage
   of the case, but I'm going to pick a claim element that
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7
   hopefully is not in this case as an example. But say the
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   plaintiff's expert has charted a product as representative
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   and a claim element requires a rod, and one of the
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   subsidiary uncharted products, say, uses a tube and
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   defendants' expert says it's not -- that's not
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   representative because it's not a rod, it's a tube.
                                                        And
   plaintiff wants to come back and somehow change its
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14
   allegations to say, well, rods and tubes are covered by
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   this claim element. That's going to be not
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   representative, I would think, though, you know, with
   patent lawyers, I could see that also becoming a claim
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   construction issue as to whether a tube can be a rod.
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            But anyway, that's about as good as I can do at
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   this stage without expert reports because the essence of
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   it is, whatever makes it into plaintiff's expert report
22
   has to be supported by evidence and statements made during
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   discovery. And so, if expert -- I mean, if plaintiff
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   wants their expert to say, you know, I think all the
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   products are representative and I think they practice
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   claims 1, 3 and 5, then we should be able to look back at
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   these -- this interrogatory response and plaintiff's
   contention as to how that product practice 1, 3 and 5.
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   And then, if defendant expert wants to say that it doesn't
   for some specific reason, it's likely that that will wind
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   up being a fact dispute but if -- you know, if plaintiff
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   wants to come in later and say, well, the chart's
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   representative of these nine products and No. 10 is --
9
   practices the patent in this completely different way that
10
   we didn't tell the defendant about during discovery, that
11
   will be a problem.
12
            MR. CUTRI: Yeah. Yeah, your Honor. So that's
13
   helpful. We will work with the plaintiff obviously when
14
   we get the charts. And I assume it's okay with the Court
15
   if one of these issues is ripe now, for example, like if
16
   we could identify them now, we should just work with the
   plaintiff and try to work that out and raise it with you
17
18
   if that's something we can't quite figure out.
19
            THE COURT: Yeah. That's fine. And what I'll do
20
   is enter an order -- and I'll ask the parties to just
21
   jointly submit an order. But what I'm going to order is
22
   sort of a granting in part and denying in part. I'm going
23
   to grant defendants' request to the extent that plaintiff
24
   needs to chart all claims that it believes its
25
   representative products practice. However, I'm going to
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   deny the request for plaintiff to provide charts for every
   product if it's plaintiff's contention that the charted
3
   products are representative of all the other products.
   And of course, plaintiff will still provide discovery on
   all the products. Not just the ones charted.
5
6
                        Thank you, your Honor.
            MR. CUTRI:
7
            THE COURT:
                        Okay. Is there anything else on
8
   behalf of defendant today?
9
            MR. CUTRI: No, your Honor. Thank you.
10
            THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Pogorzelski, anything on
11
   behalf of plaintiff?
12
            MR. POGORZELSKI: No, your Honor.
13
            THE COURT: All right.
14
            MR. CUTRI: Actually, your Honor, there is one
15
   thing. We are working with the plaintiff to get
   conception and reduction to practice evidence, they've
16
   agreed to, I think, provide it by today. If we have -- we
17
18
   have an agreement with them to get that material today.
19
   But if that doesn't come to fruition, we'll work with
20
   them; if not, you may be seeing us in the near term. We
21
   actually had a entire chart ready to be submitted on that
22
   issue, but we were able to work it out with the
23
   plaintiffs. So we'll look forward to their production,
24
   but if not, we'll be with you relatively soon.
25
            THE COURT:
                        Okay. And kind of along those lines,
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1
   I just want to make a note for everybody involved that
   both sides have exceptional local counsel in Mr. Smith and
3
   Ms. Li, and I'm sure they'll encourage y'all and help
   y'all work together. But if you can't work something out,
4
   that's what I'm here for.
5
            MR. CUTRI: Thank you, your Honor.
6
7
            MR. POGORZELSKI: Thank you, your Honor.
8
            THE COURT: So with that, we'll be adjourned.
            MR. CUTRI: Thank you.
9
10
            MR. SMITH: Thank you, your Honor.
11
             (Proceedings conclude at 10:34 a.m.)
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2	
3	REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
4	
5	I, LILY I. REZNIK, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING
6	WAS TRANSCRIBED FROM AN ELECTRONIC RECORDING MADE AT THE
7	TIME OF THE AFORESAID PROCEEDINGS AND IS A CORRECT
8	TRANSCRIPT, TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, MADE FROM THE
9	PROCEEDINGS IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER, AND THAT THE
10	TRANSCRIPT FEES AND FORMAT COMPLY WITH THOSE PRESCRIBED BY
11	THE COURT AND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES,
12	ON THIS 9th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2022.
13	
14	
15	Lily Iva Reznik
16	~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
17	LILY I. REZNIK, CRR, RMR Official Court Reporter
18	United States District Court Austin Division
19	501 West 5th Street, Suite 4153 Austin, Texas 78701
20	(512)391-8792 SOT Certification No. 4481
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